

Good afternoon everyone. I'm Tom Ambeau and I'm excited to be starting my third term on the Downtown Barrie BIA Board of Management. A bit about me. My family moved to Barrie when I was seven--my father had just started a packaging company and decided Barrie was the place to build his new plant and raise a family. I'm certainly glad he did.

I have a degree in Political Science from the University of Western Ontario. My wife and I have two boys ages 14 and 16 and we live in the south end of Barrie.

I have been in business all my life. Along with my wife Shannon, I own and operate Gel, a marketing communications agency located at 89 Collier Street. Gel has operated in Barrie for over 15 years, starting off in the south end and moving into the core 8 years ago. Currently we employ a team of five, consisting of designers, developers, and strategists.

What is the big opportunity for Downtown Barrie? I might have given a different answer a month or two ago but after having met recently with a number of our business members as well as my fellow Board members, I think it's simple--**intensification**. The bottom line is we need to attract more developers to build out the residential base in the downtown, which in turn will create more demand for the goods and services our members provide. To do this, however, we need to create an environment where development can flourish. Two specific initiatives should be pursued: one, we need to compete for development in our downtown--in other words, how do we win the next condo project over Guelph, London or Kingston? Second, we need to have a strong voice at the table with the City regarding the streetscape project--again, having a well planned, well designed and beautiful downtown corridor will be attractive to developers.

While there is plenty of opportunity for change in the downtown, I believe the area of social services might require the most attention--mainly a change of mindset. I'd like to see our well established network of social services look after the marginalized people

we currently have in our community rather than opening up their network of support to others who aren't currently in the area. It seems to me that the social services community has a finite amount of resources, both human and capital. I'd like to see them pour all of these energies and resources into addressing the needs of the marginalized population that we currently have in our downtown and not seek to grow this population beyond our community's ability to compassionately and adequately deal with them.

So, I think our first steps should be to come together as a cohesive team of doers--aligned by our commitment to execute on a specific set of priorities that serve our membership. I'm planning to ask our new Chair and/or Craig to consider bringing in a facilitator to help us identify these priorities, and establish our strategic imperatives so we can begin to execute as a new Board. I'm looking forward to working with each of you over these next four years.

Thank you.